The

आनापानस्सतिसुत्त

ānāpānassatisutta

Discourse on Mindfulness of the Breath

Translated into English

by

Śrī Maccidānanda Nātha

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कायानुपस्सना

Kāyānupassanā

Mindful Awareness of the Body

1. **दीघं वा अस्ससन्तो दीघं अस्ससामीति पजानाति**

   dīghaṃ vā assasanto dīghaṃ assasāmīti pajānāti

   Breathing in long, one understands: "I am breathing in long".

2. **रस्सं वा अस्ससन्तो रस्सं अस्ससामीति पजानाति**

   rassaṃ vā assasanto rassaṃ assasāmīti pajānāti

   Breathing in short, one understands: "I am breathing in short".

3. **सब्बकायपटिसंवेदी अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति**

   sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati

   One trains thus: "I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body".[1]

   1. The compound sabba-kāya ("entire body") is best understood here as the complete "breath-body", that is, the full cycle and field of inhalation and exhalation as it is felt throughout its extent. Paṭisaṃvedī ("directly experiencing") indicates immediate, embodied awareness rather than conceptual reflection. The instruction is thus to apprehend the breath in its totality, not as isolated segments, but as a continuous, unified process.

4. **पास्सम्भयं कायसङ्खारं अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति**

   passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmīti sikkhati

   One trains thus: "I shall breathe in calming the bodily formation". [2]

   2. Kāyasaṅkhāra ("bodily formation") is explicitly identified in the Nikāyas as the breath itself. Passambhayaṃ ("calming, tranquilising") denotes the progressive settling and refinement of this process. The instruction does not imply forceful control, but the natural quieting of the breath as attention stabilises. Thus, the breath becomes subtle, even, and less agitated as the basis for further development.

वेदनानुपस्सना

vedanānupassanā

Mindful Awareness of Feeling

5. पीति पटिसंवेदी अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति

pīti paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in experiencing joy".[3]

3. Pīti (“rapture, energised joy”) arises as a natural consequence of sustained, unified attention to the breath. It is not cultivated independently, but emerges as the system settles. Paṭisaṃvedī again indicates direct experiential contact. This stage marks the shift from mere observation of the breath to the felt energisation that accompanies collectedness of mind and body.

6. सुखं पटिसंवेदी अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति

sukhaṃ paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in experiencing happiness".[4]

4. Sukha (“ease, contented pleasure”) follows pīti as a more stable and less agitated form of well-being. Whereas pīti is often vibrant and dynamic, sukha is characterised by calm satisfaction and bodily ease. The practitioner attends directly to this quality as it arises in conjunction with the increasingly tranquil breath-process.

7. चित्तसङ्खारपटिसंवेदी अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति

cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in experiencing the mental formations".[5]

5. Cittasaṅkhāra (“mental formations”) in this context refers primarily to feeling (vedanā) and perception (saññā), the affective and perceptual processes accompanying experience. The instruction is to become directly aware of these subtle mental factors as they arise in dependence upon the breath. This marks a refinement from bodily awareness to the domain of mental activity itself.

8. पास्सम्भयं चित्तसङ्खारं अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति

passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in calming the mental formations".

चित्तानुपस्सना

Cittānupassanā

Mindful Awareness of the Mind

9. चित्तं पटिसंवेदी अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति
cittaṃ paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in experiencing the mind".[6]

6. Citta (“mind”) here refers to the overall state or condition of awareness, including its clarity, steadiness, or agitation. Paṭisaṃvedī again indicates direct experiential knowing. The practitioner observes the mind as it is, not through analysis, but through immediate acquaintance with its present state.

10. अभिप्पमोदयं चित्तं अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति
abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in gladdening the mind".[7]

7. Abhippamodayaṃ (“gladdening, brightening”) indicates the uplifting or enlivening of the mind once it has become steady. This is not an imposed emotional state, but the natural brightening that arises when distraction and dullness subside.

11. समाधयं चित्तं अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति
samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in concentrating the mind".[8]

8. Samādahaṃ (from samādahati, “to collect, bring together, unify”) refers to the gathering and stabilising of the mind into a state of composure (samādhi). This is the culmination of the preceding refinements: the mind becomes unified, steady, and firmly established, free from dispersion.

12. विमोचयं चित्तं अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति
vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in freeing [9] the mind".

9. Vimocayaṃ (“releasing, liberating”) indicates the loosening and eventual release of the mind from constraint. As the breath and associated formations calm and settle, the mind is no longer bound by agitation, grasping, or fixation. This “freeing” is not an abstract state but the experiential result of progressive calming and relinquishment, in which the mind is unbound from its habitual patterns.

धम्मानुपस्सना

Dhammānupassanā

Mindful Awareness of Mental Phenomena

13. अनिच्चानुपस्सी अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति
aniccānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in contemplating impermanence".[10]

*10. Anicca here is not an abstract doctrine but a directly observable characteristic of the breath-process. In attentive breathing, inhalation and exhalation are seen to arise, vary in length and texture, and pass away without stability. The term anupassī (**"one who observes repeatedly"**) indicates sustained, close observation of this continual alteration. Thus, impermanence is discerned concretely in the changing dynamics of the breath-body (kāyasaṅkhāra), rather than as a general philosophical reflection.*

14. विरागानुपस्सी अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति
virāgānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in contemplating dispassion".[11]

11. Virāga (lit. "fading of colour, de-tinting") denotes the waning of affective involvement. As the unstable nature of the breath and its associated sensations becomes clear, the tendency to appropriate, control, or identify with them diminishes. The practitioner neither follows nor resists the process, but allows it to unfold without interference. In this way, dispassion is not suppression, but the natural fading of engagement grounded in clear seeing.

15. निरोधानुपस्सी अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति
nirodhānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in contemplating cessation".[12]

12. Nirodha refers to the subsiding or cessation of conditioned activity. In the context of breath meditation, this is experienced as the progressive calming (passaddhi) of both the bodily formation (breath) and the mental formations associated with it. The movement of inhalation and exhalation becomes increasingly subtle and quiet. The emphasis of anupassanā here is not on producing cessation, but on attending to the natural settling and stopping of these processes as agitation diminishes.

16. पटिनिस्सग्गानुपस्सी अस्ससिस्सामीति सिक्खति
paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati

One trains thus: "I shall breathe in contemplating relinquishment".[13]

13. Paṭinissagga (*paṭi* + *nissagga*) *carries the sense of "giving back, letting go, relinquishing". At this stage, even the subtle tendency to hold to the breath, the act of observation, or the sense of agency is released. What had been attended to as "mine" or "to be managed" is allowed to fall away entirely. Thus, relinquishment marks the completion of the sequence: not merely dispassion toward phenomena, but the abandonment of all appropriation of body, breath, and mind.*

Majjhima Nikāya 118 (*Ānāpānasati Sutta*)
Śrī Maccidānanda Nātha (2026).